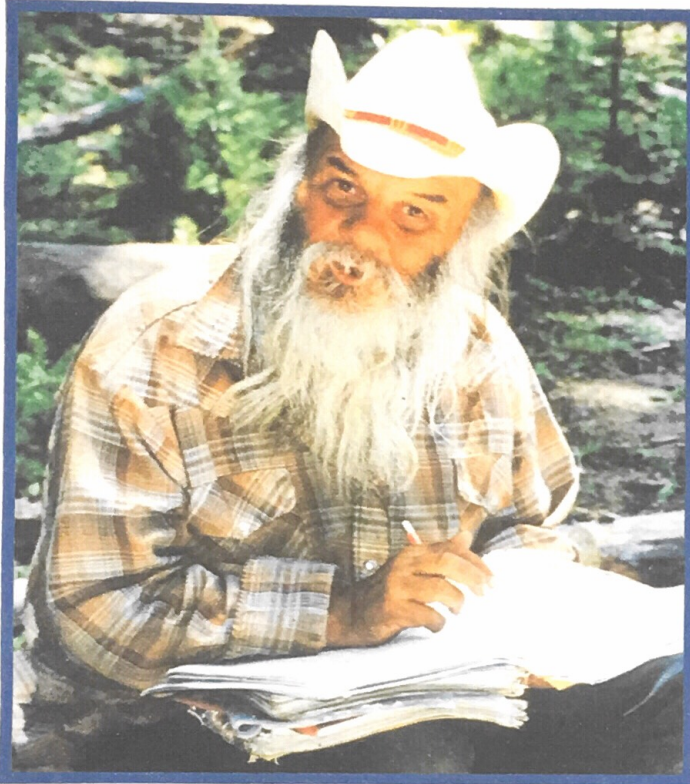




Rainbow Family Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.*

Scanned in 2018.

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05.A

CARLOS - "Families of the Past"

5 pages

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CARLOS Families of the Past

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Carlos told most of this account one night at the Oregon Gathering in 1978. As I said before, many people like Carlos were involved in small families that formed up before they came to the larger Rainbow Family. In the case of Carlos, this began in 1956, long before most Americans were really aware of the forces that would become the Sixties counter-culture. Santa Cruz, California, the place where his Butterfly Family started, has become a major counter-culture center with many people active in Rainbow, such as White Dove, who tells her story in this section. The Source Family, which Carlos mentions, is the one which sold its mansion in Hawaii to the Love Family. Jean Vision mentions helping repair that mansion in her life story.

A number of people in Rainbow, like Carlos and Medicine Story and others in this book, are of American Indian descent, but were raised with little direct contact with the old Indian life. What they have seen of traditional Indian culture has given them a deep desire for a close, intimate kind of society like an Indian tribe. However, because their main acquaintance is with the general American culture, they want a close tribe-like community, but not one that is secretive and suspicious of the outside world like many traditional Indian communities. They want a tribe that is open to admit as many new people as are willing to participate. That is what Rainbow has tried to be.]

CARLOS

I can't tell you the history of my life, because that would take me as long as it has taken me to live it - 44 years. But I can tell you stories. I am a Yaqui Indian, born in Arizona in 1939 and raised in New Mexico. The Yaqui land was from Texas to California. That's where they roamed. They didn't say they owned the land. They didn't say "This is our land." They were gypsies of the desert. They had a beautiful way of living,

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full of light. We didn't look at our way as poverty. It's a good way. It's just not dressed up. Could you imagine a Yaqui wanting to call himself chief? Just call him an elder, maybe. Yet they have more knowledge of life in their little finger than some of the so-called pure-ites. Then the Navajos and Apaches came down and said, "This is our land," and the white man said, "This is our land."

I can't really feel comfortable with the name Carlos. When I was very little, my parents called me m'hijo - Spanish for Sonny, and I liked that. Then they started calling me Carlos and I couldn't relate to that. Now that I have found a name of my own, it's a secret. I have only revealed it once before. Someday when I am really singing my heart song, I will reveal it again.

I was with my great-grandmother a lot as a child. She was a bruja - a medicine woman. Her husband was a brujo and her mother was a bruja. So she came from a clan of heavy medicine people. We used to go to the Yaqui Deer Dances and Feather Dances. It's fine to hear ten or 15 Yaquis playing flutes. My great-grandmother told me how Yaquis had lived in Arizona and New Mexico a long time ago, and the Americans had forced them down to Mexico. The Americans paid a \$25 bounty for each Yaqui that was killed. She had a thing like a Jew's harp that she played. It was very old. She used it as her medicine. She would walk around in the fields or playing it to make them grow. She was a holy sister. She knew the way of the desert and the way of people.

She was down on Mexicans. Most Yaquis in this country speak Spanish among themselves. But she wouldn't speak Spanish or allow it to be spoken in her home. She taught me the Yaqui language, but I forgot it. I haven't spoken it when she died when I was 13.

Carlos Castañeda - a lot of what's in his books is a joke. He was around some Yaqui people, but his books are more his own consciousness than they are Yaqui consciousness.

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My mother pretended to be a Chicana. A lot of Yaqui people were like that for years. Now they're coming out in the open. My mother wouldn't let us speak Spanish or Yaqui around the house - just English. She sees now that her efforts were in vain and that she was wrong to force it.

I don't hold on to the Indian image. That's in the past. It's like holding onto the image of Jesus Christ. Jesus was in the past. I live now. I don't want to be known as an Indian, but as a brother.

The only thing I liked in school was kindergarten. I loved getting down and playing. But when they began the classroom trip, I turned off. I wasn't open to the whole school trip from the first grade on. As soon as I reached the ninth grade, I quit school and went to work. But as I grew older, I became open to some things and learned them. A child should be given the right to reject or accept school. If it really feels right to him, he'll accept it - if the teacher is warm and tries to relate to him as a kid.

I was 4-F for the draft from being in reform school twice. I was in the Butterfly Family from 1956 on in California. It was started by an old man in his eighties. He was half Chinese and half Irish. He was wise and made right-on decisions. There were 13 elders, and he was the thirteenth. It was so beautiful - no locked doors and no rules. I tried acid for the first time while I was with the Butterfly Family in 1959.

It was a big family - 250 people. We were gypsies. We started in the mountains near Santa Cruz and then went up to Mendocino and then back to Sacramento. Then to Lake Tahoe and then back to Santa Cruz. In 1961 the old man died and nine of the elders were trying to be the thirteenth. The whole family was blown away with people taking sides. I was blown away when that family broke up. Me and six other people had gone into town to buy some stuff and when we got back, the family was all broke up. The adults still around were all into booze and acid, and their kids were running around hungry. It seems like when the adults are up on acid, the kids are down. We started beating

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up on the adults.

There was a lot of other families in the late Fifties and early Sixties. Back in the late Fifties I knew Jim Baker, the one who founded the Source Family around '63 or '64. He lived in Venice Beach, then he was in the Bay Area. They became a wealthy family with land in Hawaii that the Love Family has now bought from the Source Family. I was in Haight Ashbury in 1966. I used to see Barry Plunkser, who later founded the Rainbow Family, there in Haight. I didn't know him, but I knew who he was. I went to about 50 other gatherings with Rainbow Energy before the 1972 gathering at Granby, Colorado.

[I talked with Carlos again at Jayson and Feather's place in Luna, New Mexico, in February, 1979. He had come there to help prepare for the council to be held nearby that April. We talked about the Peace Camp in the California that had just been dissolved. Carlos felt the Peace Camp had gone downhill after Zack and his wife Melody and some other people had left it in Clifton, Arizona. Zack is the son of an instructor at Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma. Carlos saw Zack and others with middle class social skills as necessary for the camp - which included a number of people who had been in jails and mental hospitals - to keep order and maintain good relations with the surrounding society. In my own opinion, Peace Camps and Peace Villages are not so much "alternative lifestyles" as places for people who do not have many alternatives. For people such as Zack and Melody, who among other things, are well-versed in computers, there will always be other places to go when the going is rough.]

CARLOS - The weakness of the Rainbow Family is that there's not enough councils to relay energy during the year. Like about the Peace Camp in Clifton, Arizona, when Zack left. When he

⑦ left. When he left, a lot of other strong brothers left and he didn't go to a council about it. That left a kind of stagnant energy at the camp. I feel proud of them brothers that stayed with it—the drunks and the bikers and all—more than I do of Zack. There's no doubt about it—Zack is a beautiful brother. I really do sympathize with his decision to leave, but I can't sympathize with his responsibility, which he chosen to take and then he didn't stick it out. There were other brothers and sisters that stuck it out, but they needed support. Was I supposed to provide it?

I used to fight it so hard when my dad or some elder of that time said, "Resume responsibility," and now, here I am saying the same fucking words—"Resume responsibility."

Rainbow energy is the strength of your space, the strength of my space, the strength of all our spaces. Not that we should all be in one space. We are one in the Spirit, but we should be learning to keep our spaces strong. I don't want people to put me on a throne—just to keep my space and do what I can, to help our brothers and sisters.

What we're seeking as a family is a spiritual wholeness with each other. But as far as a oneness of consciousness—no. We're individuals. We want a relationship with each other—not a uniform glass surface. Like I can relate to a member of the Love Family as an individual person, a brother, not as a member of the Family. Love Israel gives the people in his family their names to represent some virtue they manifest. I can't relate to that name. [If I hear it, I will forget it. Only the person themselves can find their name.]

[Since this interview, Carlos has died.]